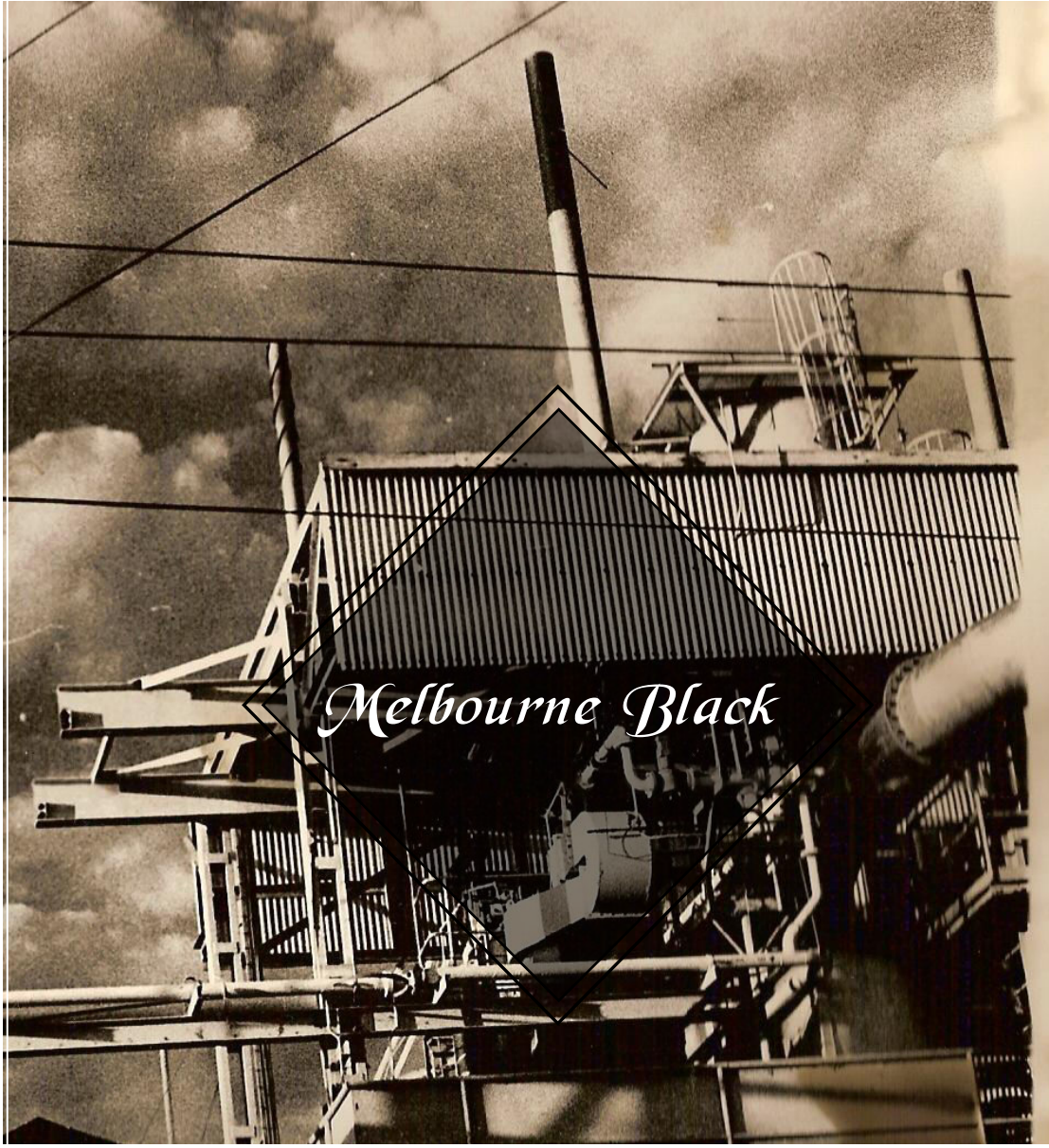

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[3] *Borders & Prisons: Commonalties, Social Mediation & The Prison Industrial Complex* By The Abolition Collective; [10] *Action Against Changes to Sentencing Laws in Victoria*; [14] *Trade Unions: In the National Interest* By Ben Rosenzweig & Liz Thompson; [23] *Migrant Anarchists and the New Left* By Conal Thwaite; [39] *Blogging Reflections* By @ndy; [43] *Declaration of the People's Solidarity Gathering and Commitments to Actions.*

Borders & Prisons: Commonalties, Social Mediation & The Prison Industrial Complex

By The Abolition Collective

This presentation [given at *Breakout: A Conference for the Free Movement of People*, Sydney, 10-12 December 2010] is drawn from The Abolition Collective. We are small group attempting to ground an analysis around the prison industrial complex (PIC) and its impacts. We are a collective committed to creating safer communities without prisons or policing, and stopping the expansion of the PIC. The collective has been running for about a year and a half and has previously helped to organize conferences and speakers, information raising nights, and we have the aim of becoming a group dedicated to taking action around policing, prisons and their impact. We are currently organizing an action for February.

The 'Prison Industrial Complex' is a term we use to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to what are actually economic, social and political issues. When we talk about the PIC, we are talking about

criminalization, some media, surveillance, policing, courts and the prisons themselves; and all that flows from those components.

The aim here today is to draw out some of the links between policing and incarceration with border policing and detention.

Over the past two days we've engaged in the ways in which social, political and economic problems turn up as law, order and security issues. That to ensure our own safety, we must watch, control and cage certain groups of people – those who experience the most structural inequalities including poverty or racism. The use of the analysis of the border as a perimeter, but also a mediator in our lives connects fundamentally with the language of exploring the PIC.

In response we need to challenge who and what we understand as 'criminal', what suitable responses are to 'criminal' acts, and examine the use of criminality as a threat (that is incredibly effective in evoking feelings of fear and vulnerability). This standpoint lends itself to understanding the barriers in place when talking about the border and its levels of control and order - such as the naming of illegal immigration and mandatory detention.

Within the urgency and immediacy of the push to respond to this idea of illegality, there is this argument that asylum seekers are not criminals. We need to be careful to consider what impact this might have in consolidating what or who then remains as criminal. We are concerned that this line sometimes plays off asylum seekers in mandatory detention with people experiencing the criminal justice system. It runs the risk of assuming that one group deserves criminality where the other does not, rather than looking at how different communities and actions become criminal. As these two forms of incarceration that you'll see overlap, and so, playing off against one another reduces the opportunity to develop deeper analysis that covers both areas.

The impacts of racism, classism, and the enforcement of specific social norms weigh heavily in determining how people are treated by police, the courts and in the immigration and prison system more generally. We aim to contribute to the creation of a language and dialogue around abolition and

> racialised 'other' implies a mainstream 'community', one that is characterised by the "prejudices of white, middle-class, Australian society".[4]

In addition, the impact of being imprisoned on people from refugee and migrant backgrounds may be much harsher and more difficult than people from anglo backgrounds. Systematic language barriers not only leave people isolated but also unable to understand or follow prison rules, and reliant upon inaccurately relayed information in relation to their sentences or legal representation; and much more likely to face difficulty in accessing basic prison programs, obtaining health services and exercising rights such as consulting legal advisors. Moreover, prison release can also mean movement to a detention centre and deportation.[5]

This leads to the pressing issue in NSW of decreasing funding in prisons, and, if the newly elected coalition in Victoria can successfully see their tough on crime legislation through, for Victoria as well. In terms of law and order and the mechanisms for control, it is time that we started talking in more detail about the relationship between prisons and immigration detention centres. At first glance, it has been the same people running for-profit incarceration services across both detention centres and prisons for the past 13 years in Australia (since immigration camps were privatised).

At the moment a UK based corporation, Serco, run all of the detention centres in Australia. When the contract with Serco was announced by the immigration minister in November 2009, he famously advised that there was 'no one else' to run these facilities. It was an interesting statement given the reason privatisation

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[4] Smith, B. & Reside, S., *Boys, You Wanna Give Me Some Action? A Report of the 2009/10 Racism Project: Interventions into Policing of Racialised Communities in Melbourne'*, p. 13, accessible at: <http://www.fitzroy-legal.org.au/cb_pages/files/LegalAid_RacialAdol_FA2.pdf>. *See also:* Findlay, M. 2004 *Introducing Policing: Challenges for police and Australian communities*, South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, p. 117.

[5] *See:* CHRIP, *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in Prisons*, October 2010.

was originally introduced into the prison system (at first in Queensland) was to enamour competition, to open the prisons to the market and increase their efficiency (in other words - the government wanted to reduce costs and break the prison guard union's monopoly on bargaining). This same corporation run the Acacia Prison in Western Australia and the Borallon Prison on Queensland.

Little known in Australia is that this company are also involved in servicing the Australian, US and UK armies, and the nuclear arms industry.

To put things in a bit more perspective in NSW there are major reviews of the prison system, with the aim to save $60 million through privatization of the Parklea prison (The same was attempted with Cessnock, but the guards association campaigned hard). You may have guessed that one of the tenders for this contract was Serco.

It appears that the NSW remodelling takes up where the reasons why privatisation commenced in Queensland in the early 90's – to change the bargaining power of workers in prisons and supposedly save money. Apparently these changes have been in response to staff budget blowouts, and the Public Service Association of NSW (who represent the guards) have strongly denied this and run an anti privatization campaign. We saw the response to this privatizing agenda with the strike across all NSW prisons for 24 hours in October last year and the lockdown of prisoners in cells for the duration.

We need to be mindful of this renewed push for privatisation, but how do we position these changes within a broader political struggle?

It is alarming to think what the impact of reducing costs by $60 million will have on the prisoners of NSW, or to consider that the same organisation that runs Villawood Detention Centre could also have been responsible for the prisons in the same state. The contract for Parklea has gone to The GEO group. This company was formerly called ACM, whom perpetuated the atrocious conditions at the desert detention camps, and who are now running this prison in NSW; they also run Fulham prison in Victoria.

The other company running a prison in Victoria is G4S Australia Pty Ltd.; they run Port Phillip prison. You might also

result in more people being imprisoned in Victoria, but is likely to have very little impact on deterring people from committing crimes. For this reason the Federation of Community Legal Centres has stated that 'Abolishing suspended sentences is likely to lead to a costly and unsustainable increase in the prison population without tackling the causes of crime.'[1]

Another change introduced by the new legislation is to increase the number of people on the Sentencing Advisory Council, and also to require that the Council have representation from a Victim's Group and from Victoria Police. These changes appear designed to ensure that the Sentencing Advisory Council takes a 'tough-on-crime' approach to sentencing issues, rather than acting as an independent community voice on sentencing, which was what the Council was created to do. The Council must represent a range of community views on sentencing, not just those that favour harsher penalties.

[1] Smart Justice, 'Abolishing suspended sentences may increase crime', 22 December 2010, available from: <http://www.communitylaw.org.au/cb_pages/media_releases.php>

Minimum Standards for Serious Crimes

The new Government has also stated it will be introducing legislation to set minimum penalties for serious crimes. The minimum can apparently be lessened if there are extenuating or aggravated circumstances, but the overall aim is for the minimum standards to increase the amount of time inside for those convicted of a crime. The Coalition has stated that these changes are intended to 'protect the community and deter would-be offenders'.[2] The new sentencing standards will apparently be developed in conjunction with the (newer, harsher) Sentencing Advisory Council, and the Court of Appeal will review sentences with the new minimum standards. The minimum standards will also aim to increase the non-parole period for 'street violence' and for people convicted of not providing known details of child abuse.

Changes to Community Based Orders and Home Detention

[2] Coalition Press release, 'Coalition to set minimum sentence standards for serious crimes', 23 November 2010.

The new Government has promised to 'toughen' and streamline the four existing community orders into a single Community Correction Order (CCO). The aim as stated by the government is for 'tougher, common-sense sentences targeted directly at both the offender and the offence'.[3] This is another change that will mean Judges and Magistrates will have fewer options as to how to deal with the people who come before the Courts, and limit their ability to address complex factors which may cause offending such as drug addiction, mental health issues, poverty and homelessness. There is also talk that people under Orders will be put to 'real work' and an implicit push for people to generally receive more community-ordered work hours. The Coalition has also advised plans for abolishing home detention. The overall aim of this measure is accordingly also to increase sentence time. Tellingly, Baillieu recognised that the (approximately) 4,500 people currently incarcerated will increase.

[3] Coalition Press release, 'Coalition to give teeth to community-based sentences', 23 November 2010.

Tougher sentences mean more people in prison for longer

The Coalition has acknowledged that it anticipates a 'likely increase' in the number of people who are imprisoned due to its 'tough-on–crime' policies including 'extra police, more transit police, tougher sentencing, a zero tolerance to violence and drunken behaviour and anti-social behaviour – and … the abolition of home detention and suspended sentences.'[4] However, the Coalition has also asserted that it expected any increase in prison numbers to be in the short term, as once people are locked away for longer, crime will be reduced and these new penalties will be a stronger deterrent to committing crime. When asked on 3AW what evidence there is to support the claim that longer sentences reduce crime, Baillieu advised that increased sentences will get people 'off the street'. Baillieu could not provide specific research supporting his idea that increased sentences will reduce crime. He went on to say his logic is that while people are in prison, crime will not be

[4] AAP, '500 more beds for male prisoners', 24 November 2010.

began to make use of these new ways through Australian border control; they fudged who they were and in particular how rich they were, they scammed their way through, and they did it all mostly for often-last-ditch family survival strategies which entailed achieving permanent residency, and getting more-or-less skilled employment paid in Australian dollars.

As people squeezed themselves through Australian border control into international student visas, economies developed around them as a market and as a labour market. In India, banks started to bet on the success of these people, and thus on the future capacity to repay loans, and thus became willing to extend money to enable more families to pursue such strategies. (As with the famous "sub-prime loans" in the United States, loans were decreasingly based upon the current wealth or income of applicants; unlike sub-prime loans, they were intended to generate revenue for the banks through the *success* of those granted loans – the property in effect put up as collateral was less desirable than the money which could be repaid if the students got PR, a qualification, and a job with reasonable pay in Australian dollars.)

At this point in our story, these movements of the not-wealthy began to come into conflict with another movement within Australia, or rather with a network of interests and agendas which coalesced in part in efforts to defeat the movement formed around the "international education" strategy. A network of academics, a section of the state, and certain key trade unions set out to put a stop to the possibility of this strategy, at least as a strategy of those who are not wealthy and who do not fit into the material interests and political agendas of those in this network.

While for a number of years the federal government effectively looked the other way, happy at the growth of an "export industry" not based around digging things out of the ground, this network was eventually empowered by a series of "crises" within and around international education economies, which created the moment in which interests and agendas could be asserted which led to the restructuring of international education economies we are still witnessing.

Thus, mass expulsion and new walls preventing the not-rich from getting into this country. For a significant portion of those currently on international student visas, this restructuring has moved them from a hyper-exploitable sub-class of the proletariat, to a stratum marked as enslavable. This is what the Australian trade union movement demanded be done to those at the bottom end of Australian labour markets, on the basis that they are foreigners and not "Australian workers". Many tens of thousands of people have been massively affected, making this one of the biggest achievements of the Left blue collar unions in recent years.

This is not meant as a story of betrayal by some union bureaucrats, or as a critique of 'backward' attitudes amongst trade unionists. Our contention is that the actions of these unions – in particular of the CFMEU, the AMWU, the ETU and the ANF – flows smoothly from the material basis of trade unionism, and from its 'Left' and militant edges in particular. And to understand this we need to understand what unions *are* in a way which does not simply reproduce the romantic investments of the bulk of the Left, and to understand the role of economic nationalisms as the de facto ideologies of trade unionism per se, "the belief that economic actors in a nation all have a shared experience of the international economy, and that this international economy is expressed as something alien – to be collectively defended against or collectively conquered".[1]

Across the spectrum we might call the Left, from whatever passes for a social democrat through to the organised socialist parties and trotocracies, and indeed many who call themselves anarchists, at least sometimes, trade unions are institutions of the working class, "our" organisations. Whatever problems of leadership or bureaucracy, they are to be "defended". In fact, it is important to have "misleadership" and bureaucratic deformation available, so that, in the last instance, any problems can be attributed to these contingent factors and the unions themselves inoculated from critique. If nothing else, trade unions are understood as organs

[1] Dick Bryan, 'Australian Economic National: Old and New', *Australian Economic Papers* 30(57), December 1991, p. 290.

Clause the CFMEU NSW has inserted into EBAs[4]

An employer or other entity wishing to use VEVO [DIAC's Visa Entitlement Verification Online system] to check the work entitlements of prospective employees currently requires the consent of the prospective employee to do so. Consent should not be required; and any employer/other entity engaging a worker after the worker refused consent to check their work entitlement on VEVO should lose any right to the available statutory defences. - **CFMEU Recommendation[5]**

When the CFMEU pressures employers to pressure employees to sign the documents which would permit an investigation into their "immigration status", what is being institutionalised?

These are phenomena of the trade union Left and of the more 'militant' tendencies; the struggle to defend the position of "members" understood as a struggle against other proletarians. There is no visible Left tendency in the trade unions which actively opposes this intersection of trade unionism and border control; the Left of the union bureaucracies most actively pursues this intersection, and does so in alliance with a stratum of nationalist academics. Given the role of educational institutions in Australian border control, this alliance is far from trivial.

By channelling class struggle into nationally-organised demand management, and institutionalising a role for trade unions in wage negotiations and even wider questions of distribution, social democracy integrated such struggle into a motor of capitalist development; the power of a nationally-defined proletariat within capitalism was founded upon the reproduction of the division of labour as a global relation to capital. With the successive versions of the Accord we saw an ever-starker integration of the unions into the management of neoliberalisation.

In other words, the power of unions is a power within the reproduction of the labour force, negotiating its divisions.

The constant restructuring associated with neoliberalisation has erased much of the basis for Australia's laborist version of social democracy, and with it

[4] Ibid. Attachment 2, p. 18.
[5] Ibid. P. 12.

much of the basis for traditional economic nationalism. With the fading of hopes in a renewal of protectionism and a parallel fading of economic nationalist antagonism to "foreign capital", the most consistent and conspicuous assertion of economic nationalism as a trade union ideology now targets "foreign workers" as a metonym of neoliberalisation, as undermining condition of "Australian workers" if not as scabs.

We now see the defense of this foundation in struggles to have the state police the boundaries of labour markets through stronger and more restrictive border control and the reassertion and enforcement of the distinction between citizen and non-citizen - as equivalent to legal and illegal labour (CFMEU, AMWU, ETU) or as a means of subordination in which non-citizens (for example, international students working in nursing homes and the aged care sector) are relegated to lower position, often directly managed by the citizens who makes up the relevant trade unions (the militant trade unionists of the Australian Nursing Federation, who are often the direct managers in the workplace of these non-citizen workers).

Many in the left seem surprised that the most militant left-wing trade unions – the CFMEU, ANF and AMWU – are the most hostile to the interests of non-citizen workers working in Australian labour markets.

The Australian government must have the power to effectively manage the migration program. At present the government does not have that power. This Bill will give the government more power to control the number and characteristics of persons entering, living and working in Australia on most visa classes, though it does not guarantee that the power will be exercised.
CFMEU[6]

The divisions within the proletariat as a transnational class are not just illusions, not simply false consciousness, but exist as divisions in the experience of material interest, of a global division of labour of vast distinctions in quality of life, stratifications of survival and life-span, and the constitution of the relatively privileged as increasingly

[6] CFMEU, *Submission to Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Inquiry into Migration Amendment (Visa Capping) Bill 2010*, 17 June 2010, p. 4.

MIGRANT ANARCHISTS AND THE NEW LEFT

BY CONAL THWAITE

Chapter Two of Conal's *'Anarcho-Syndicalism in Melbourne and Sydney'*. Using the examples of Bulgarian and Spanish anarchist migrants in Melbourne and Sydney post-Second World War, this chapter explores the creation of small anarcho-syndicalist groups in both cities; the relationship between migrant anarchists and young Australian anarchists, noting the influence of migrant anarchists in creating a current within the Australian New Left that moved away from Marxism and towards anarchism; and the anarcho-syndicalist foundations these groups laid for the later work of groups such as the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation. Conal's thesis is an attempt 'to explore the origins of a small anarcho-syndicalist current that appeared in Australia by the 1980s.' An edited version of the thesis has been made available on our website: *melbourneblack.wordpress.com*

After the Second World War small numbers of European anarchists migrated to Australia. They were escaping waves of reaction and fascism that had continued virtually without interlude from the defeat of the republican forces in Spain early in 1939. After the peace settlement of 1945, anarchists in Eastern Europe were also forced to escape new communist dictatorships in the Soviet Bloc; hence anarchists from Russia, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Italy and

Spain came to Australia.[1] During the 1950s and 1960s those from Bulgaria and Spain formed groups in Sydney and Melbourne. The Sydney Anarchist Group (SAG) was formed by Bulgarians with some local members in the 1950s, and became involved with the celebrated Sydney Push. The Spanish were involved in a range of projects in Melbourne and Sydney, including their own Spanish language newspapers as well as anarchist groups that involved students and young workers. Both the Bulgarians and Spanish were arriving from countries with strong anarchist movements, and many were anarcho-syndicalists. However, they found it difficult to advocate anarchism to workers in Australia, who had not shared their earlier experiences and who lacked the same political points of reference. This chapter will argue that through their organisations in Melbourne and Sydney, migrant anarchists helped establish a small, activist, anarcho-syndicalist current in Australia.

A number of Bulgarian anarchists began arriving as refugees in Sydney in the early 1950s. They included George Kristoff and Jack Grancharoff, who were two of the most active. Bulgarians formed only a small part of the wave of migration from war torn Europe to Australia after the Second World War. Numbers rose from around 500 in 1947 to over 1,200 by 1954.[2] Like most other Bulgarians, the anarchists who arrived at this time were political refugees from communism. Some, like Kristoff, were veterans of the Bulgarian National Confederation of Labour (CNT-B).[3] With his brother he had been a part of an anarchist partisan group operating during the war against the Bulgarian government and the Nazis, but

[1] Jack Grancharoff mentions several of these nationalities in an interview, Iain McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist: Troublemaking in the 1950s/60s,' an Interview with Jack Grancharoff, in *Disturbing the Peace: Tales from Australia's Rebel Histories*, *How to Make Trouble and Influence People,* Vol 1., (Melbourne: Homebrew Books, 2005), p. 101.

[2] Stefan Kozuharov, 'Bulgarians', in, James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 188.

[3] The CNT-B, as it was known by its French initials; C. Longmore, *The IWA Today: A Short Account of the International Workers Association and its Sections* (South London: DAM-IWA, 1985), p. 27.

power.[18] When ninety anarchists were arrested en masse at their first legal congress in years, this was a signal that the independence of the workers committees had ended.[19] In the years that followed, most anarchists were killed, went to prison, were forced underground or fled the country. The small number who eventually came to Australia found here a very different kind of libertarian movement.

From the late fifties to the early seventies, radical politics in Australia took a libertarian turn. A major contributing factor was the increasing disillusionment of socialists with the politics of the Soviet Union, and locally with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). One of the earliest benefactors of this new dissent, and one of the most obvious libertarian precursors to the New Left, was the Libertarian Push in Sydney. It drew heavily on the individualism of the Sydney philosopher John Anderson. Anderson was a communist who later turned to Trotskyism, but by the forties his libertarianism had shifted towards a right-wing, anti-communism, mistrustful of any kind of progressive politics.[20] Although it was more of a political scene than a formal organisation as such, The Push grew up out of a split from Anderson's Freethought Society.[21] Its members stylised themselves as freethinkers, but were more sympathetic to the left. An important influence on the Push was the influx of dissident communists who had left or were expelled by the CPA, especially after demoralising episodes like Khrushchev's so called, 'secret speech', in which he denounced the crimes of Stalin, and after the invasion of Hungary in 1956. In Sydney, intellectuals of this vein congregated around Helen Palmer's journal *Outlook,* and in Melbourne around the journal *Overland*.[22] Some of those

[19] Jack Grancharoff, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part Three, *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (April - May, 2010), p. 18.
[20] 'Workers Committees in Bulgaria', p. 4.

[21] See A.J. Baker, *Anderson's social philosophy* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1979), pp. 79, 101, 130-133.
[22] A. J. Baker, 'Sydney Libertarianism and the Push' *Broadsheet*, No. 81 (March, 1975) p. 3.
[23] A collection of essays exploring the ideas of Palmer can be found in, Doreen Bridges (ed.), *Helen Palmer's Outlook* (Sydney: Helen Palmer Memorial Committee, 1982). The New Left in

influenced by these circles became interested in libertarian socialist ideas. Germaine Greer would later describe herself as an anarchist communist, while in Melbourne Ian Turner helped to revive the memory of the Australian IWW.[23] However, the Push itself remained localised in Sydney and while explicitly libertarian, it was not explicitly left-wing. It was also a predominantly middle-class phenomenon. Many Push intellectuals ended their intellectual journey as right-wing, liberal individualists, as Anderson had done. Nevertheless, in the fifties the Push was a kind of preliminary version of the counter-cultural and student movements that would take hold in the sixties.

In the late fifties and sixties the Bulgarians in SAG became involved with the Push. In 1958 the two groups rented a space together, Liberty Hall, at 727 George Street near Haymarket. Here meetings were held two to three times a week. However, the Bulgarians later claimed that the bond of ninety pounds was lost because the 'crazy libertarians' left rubbish in the rooms and the street outside, and threw bottles.[24] In her history of the Push, Anne Coombs mentions the Bulgarians but not in relation to Liberty Hall. She postulates that the space was either given up or the landlord kicked the tenants out.[25] The relation between the Bulgarians and the Push was cordial, although there was a rift between the Bulgarians' 'European style anarchism' and Sydney libertarianism.[26] Grancharoff was most friendly with members of the Push, attending their regular discussion circles. He became known to them as, 'Jack

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Australia has been the subject of a number of studies including; Richard Gordon, (ed.), *The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategies,* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1970), and more recently, John McLaren, *Free Radicals of the Left in Postwar Melbourne*, (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2003).

[24] 'Greer on Revolution; Greer on Love', A discussion between Germaine Greer, Ian Turner and Chris Hector, recorded in Melbourne, February 1972, *Overland*, Nos. 50-51, (Autumn, 1972), pp. 44-55; for Turners work on the IWW see Ian Turner, *Sydney's Burning (An Australian Political Conspiracy)* (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1969).

[25] James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'; Grancharoff also confirms this, Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant', p. 17.

[26] Anne Coombs, *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push* (Ringwood, Victoria; Penguin Books Australia, 1996), p. 104.

[27] Ibid., p. 102.

in the world'.[40] The Cellar soon became more famous for the parties held there than for anarcho-syndicalism. The Bulgarians were against drug use in the space, and became increasingly critical of Dwyer's erratic behaviour. The Cellar finally came to a spectacular end when it was raided by police, which caused a small media sensation in Sydney and ended in twelve months incarceration for Dwyer.[41] Throughout this period, SAG had put out a publication called *The Anarchist*. It included many contributions from Dwyer, Grancharoff, and Kristoff. Although the friction between traditional anarchism and the new libertarianism had become more evident, the Bulgarian migrants and SAG had managed to have an impact on the discourse going on around them. In reference to the several incarnations of the group, a later summary written in an anarchist bulletin said, 'Today's anarchist movement developed chiefly from the Sydney Anarchist Group'.[42]

Another influence on young anarchists in Australia was the presence of Spanish migrants. The Spanish anarchists had far more intergenerational interaction than the Bulgarians, as there had been a higher number of Spanish migrants come to Australia since the early twentieth century. An early pioneer was Salvador Torrents, a worker from Catalonia who escaped Spain after taking part in the revolutionary movement of 1909.[43] Spanish anarchists were most active in north Queensland, where Basques and Catalans had settled in the area around Ingham during the first half of the century. After the Civil War, although there was an exodus of some 600,000 from Spain, numbers coming to Australia remained low until assisted migration in the fifties

[41] Bill Dwyer, 'Bill Dwyer's Defence Notes', in Bob James (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia'.
[42] James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.

[43] FAAB, New Series, No. 1, cited in, John Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981', originally published in *Freedom*, (June 1981), available at, <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/syd7581.htm> [1/10/2010].
[44] James Mason, 'Salvador Torrents: A Case Study', in 'Agitators and Patriots: Cultural and Political Identity in Queensland's Spanish Communities,1900-1975' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2008), pp. 42-7.

and sixties. Most of these newcomers could be characterised as economic migrants.[44] Few of the anarchists who escaped repression after Franco's victory in April 1939 came to Australia. Australian immigration policy was highly concerned to exclude left-wing radicals, and the Spanish were not even recognised in the Australian government's Displaced Persons scheme in 1947.[45] Therefore by the 1960s Spanish anarchists in Australia were made up of some veterans of the Civil War, some second-generation migrants, and some recent economic migrants who were influenced by the Spanish anarchist community in Australia.

The best known Civil War anarchist in Australia was Vicente Ruiz, and his generation attempted to proselytise to the younger, mainly economic migrants. Ruiz had been a secretary of his local branch of the CNT in the railways of Málaga, and begun a militia with his brother upon the outbreak of Civil War. He did not arrive in Australia until 1965, and was involved in a range of projects, including establishing the Fitzroy Legal Service and the Tenants Union of Victoria.[46] Vicente Ruiz's son, Vicente Ruiz Jnr was also involved in the more adventurous anarchist 'Free Store' project in Collingwood, where one could take what one needed and gave what one could.[47] By the early 1970s anarchists in Melbourne and Sydney published magazines in Spanish called *Nosotros* and *Acracia*. Migrant anarchists of Ruiz's generation, who often spoke bad English, were activists in their communities. An article in *Nosotros* argued that Spanish economic migrants arriving from the intellectually stifling conditions in Franco's Spain could be converted to

[45] Barry York, 'Spanish', in, James Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 691.

[46] Mason, 'Agitators and Patriots', p. 176.

[47] Vicente Ruiz Foundation, 'Vicente Ruiz Biography', available from <http://flag.blackened.net/vrf/biog.htm> [Accessed, 12/9/2010].

[48] 'Carnival anarchism in Melbourne 1970-1975', available from <http://www.takver.com/history/melb/carnival1970_75.htm> [Accessed 5/10/10]; Chesterman, John, *Poverty Law and Social Change: the Story of the Fitzroy Legal Service* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996), pp. 26, 31.

held very different perspectives on how to achieve an anarchist society, and what an anarchist movement would look like. A new brand of 'carnival' anarchism influenced by situationalism had become popular in some groups, including the SAG in Sydney. These groups focused on spontaneity and the revolutionary consciousness of the individual.[59] On the other hand, collectivist ideas like syndicalism that aimed to ground anarchist praxis in the economic structure of capitalist society were the subject of controversy. As one observer put it, 'the economic role of anarchists... became the scene of some of the bitterest debate'.[60] The FAA lasted only two years before falling apart. 'The Split', as it became known, had its origins in the syndicalist orientated part of the FAA deciding that, 'the FAA was far too broad, incorporating people with conflicting ideologies (individualism, carnival anarchism, syndicalism and so on); and that opposition to the state is not a sufficient basis for a united anarchist movement'.[61] Some parts of this faction had started work on a book distribution network, which in Sydney culminated in the purchasing of a property to house Jura Books in 1977.[62]

By this time in the late seventies, most of the Spanish and Bulgarians migrants were ageing and their active numbers were reduced to a few individuals. Some projects continued, like the Bulgarian's CNT-B newspaper *Our Path*, which Kristoff continued to publish from Sydney until the late 1980s.[63] Spanish editions of *Acracia* were also published in Australia as late as 1991.[64] In Sydney the remaining Bulgarian and Spanish anarchists continued to be involved in Jura Books. A Melbourne Anarcho-Syndicalist Group, which

[60] Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981'.
[61] 'The Split: a Monash Anarchist Perspective,' FAAB, Monash Edition, 1976, in, *Melbourne Anarchist Archives*, pp. 81-3.
[62] 'Statement by Seven Participants on the Formation of the LSF', *Libertarian Socialist Bulletin* (July 1976), cited in, John Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981', originally published in *Freedom*, (June 1981) available at <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/syd7581.htm> [Accessed, 1/10/2010].
[63] Englart, 'Anarchism in Sydney 1975-1981'.
[64] *Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review*, No. 37, (1988).
[65] *Acracia: Publicación Anarquista de Habla Hispana en Australia*, Vol. 2, No. 6, (June 1991).

involved some ex-CNT members, was formed in 1983.[65]

The interaction between anarchist migrants and the young libertarians in Australia was at times contradictory. However it also produced rare instances within the New Left, whereby the shift away from the authoritarian left was articulated as a clear and definite turn towards the anarchism. The anarchist migrants expressed a clear continuity between the 'old' class analysis and the new social movements. However, the discourse of Australian anarchism remained generally confused and relatively isolated. Anarchism was only a radical fringe of the New Left. Explicitly anarchist groups remained, if not rare, then still relatively small. Although the New Left involved definite, libertarian-socialist elements, it did not produce a large anarchist movement in Australia.

[66] ASG-M', 'Report of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASG-M) to the IWA Plenary, Toulouse, November 1999,' p.1.

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BLOGGING REFLECTIONS

BY @NDY

I officially started blogging over six years ago, and have been doing so in earnest--that is, almost daily--for about five. That's a fairly long time for a blog, and many of those which were established at the same time as my own, and in roughly similar circumstances, have since ceased publication (often for the best of reasons).

I'd been reading blogs for several years prior to this point, most of which documented the interesting lives, exciting adventures and unsteady career progressions of my peers. Leading a basically dull existence, and given the particular focus of much of my own blogging, I've never really indulged in much personal introspection online, and generally prefer to keep an ironic distance between myself and the subject of my writing. This relative degree of anonymity has been both a blessing and a curse. In the short-term I intend to continue blogging, but it's highly unlikely I'll last another five years, or even one.

My initial blogging efforts were dedicated to examining the far right in Australia, and to a lesser extent their counterparts overseas. (It should be noted in this context that Australian fascists are adept at networking with their foreign comrades.) This focus was almost entirely the result of my (ongoing) participation in the Trans-Tasman 'anti-racist' 'Fight Dem Back!' network, it being established at about this time (late 2004) and involving a number of individuals from an array of political perspectives. Of course, I've also written about anarchism, and a range of other matters: the changing

fortunes of the far left (and the Collingwood Magpies), social struggles in Australian and overseas, music and of course politics. Basically, the subject matter of my blog has been whatever happens to have attracted my interest that day or week, and which I could be bothered commenting on.

Apart from anything else, blogging has been a useful tool in terms of allowing me to articulate some ideas and opinions that would otherwise have remained unexpressed. It's had the added advantage--or, in some cases, disadvantage--of not having to pass through any kind of filter prior to publication. Thus I've been able to express myself without regard for academic conventions, journalistic standards or the demands of good taste. Finally, while the contents of my posts are obviously my responsibility, the credit for both the name of my blog and its byline ('Anarchy and apathy battle it out on @ndy's blog') is due to others who shall--like the City in HP Lovecraft's short story--remain Nameless.

To this date, the blog has attracted over a million page views, and many tens of thousands of visitors. It averages a little less than one thousand visits a day, although this number fluctuates quite a lot according to various trends in news and opinion. It would likely attract a higher number of visitors were it not for the fact that it's been blocked by filtering software. A case in point is WebSense, which blocks access to my blog on the grounds of its 'Militancy & Extremist' opinions. I've asked WebSense for clarification on this point, but am yet to receive a reply.

Probably the most popular blog subject has been Tyler Cassidy. His shooting by police in December 2008 triggered the largest number of visits to my blog, and it remains probably the most popular online source for information on his brief life and premature death. Otherwise, there are a small number of other topics for which my blog ranks highly, from the nationalist yoof gang the 'Southern Cross Soldiers' (of which Tyler was a member) to the US-based yoof gang 'Friends Stand United' to imprisoned Australian anti-fascist Jock Palfreeman and the dead English bonehead Ian Stuart Donaldson (Skrewdriver vocalist and co-founder of neo-Nazi musical network 'Blood & Honour') – even petunias(!).

Declaration of the People's Solidarity Gathering and Commitments to Actions

The following are the declarations of the delegation of Latin American, Asia-Pacific & Australian representatives, comprising of representatives from SINALTRAINAL (Colombia's National Union of Food Industry Workers), SINTRACARBON (Colombia's Mining Union), MST (Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement), Cordillera People's Alliance (Philippines), LASNET (Latin American Solidarity Network), Bougainville, Mt Nancy Town Camp, FETRAMIN (Chile's Mine Workers' Federation) & Wayuu (Indigenous communities from Colombia) and Afro-Colombian communities, who participated in the *Latin American, Australian & Asia-Pacific Solidarity Gathering* on 12-14 November and 26-27 November 2010 in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. This declaration has been taken back to the aforementioned organisations, and subsequently ratified by them.

The gathering and solidarity activities consolidate LASNET's solidarity commitment with grass roots social and political movements in struggles and resistance throughout Latin America, from the Bravo River to the Patagonia.

Firstly, we declare:

The behaviour of Multinational Corporations, as the vanguard of global capital, creates nothing but misery and devastation in our communities, and to our environment. With shared practises, and with support from our various Nation

States, these corporations are dispossessing and impoverishing our peoples with global policies of exploitation, casualisation, attacks on unions, displacement of aboriginal communities, intervention in indigenous affairs, attacks on food sovereignty with transgenic seeds and the use of toxics on food plantations.

To face this onslaught, we need to globalise our resistance and struggles. Through working across our social movements, Indigenous peoples and trade unions, we must unite and implement grassroots international models of resistance, struggle and solidarity.

Secondly, we declare:

To achieve this objective, we have decided to create the *International Co-ordination Against Multinational Policies* (*International Multinational Monitor / Observatorio Internacional de las Políticas de las Multinacionales*). This Co-ordination aims to raise awareness, to monitor and denounce the behaviour of multinational corporations, initially in the areas of Latin America and the Asia-Pacific. Also, the Co-ordination will seek out other bodies involved in working against multinationals, both in Australia and overseas. Until August 2011, this body will be co-ordinated from Australia, by LASNET.

The main tasks of the Co-ordination are:

- Compiling an international calendar of events and actions denouncing the behaviour of multinational corporations:
  - March 8: International Day of Women in Struggle.
  - March 29: Young Fighter Day.
  - April 17: Struggle for Land Day.
  - April 24: International Day of Indigenous People.
  - May 1: International Workers' Day.
  - First week of May: International Solidarity Struggles in Philippines.
  - June 1: International Day of Student Struggles.
  - July 22: International Day Against Multinationals' Policies.
  - August10: Miners' International Day
  - October 16: International Day of Struggles Against Multinationals and Food Sovereignty.

policies; and to eliminate the workers' rights abuses and anti-union practices implemented in Latin America, in the Asia-Pacific region, and in poor countries by these multinationals; and also to prevent those policies being implemented in their countries. Any victory will be a victory for the workers and poor people in Latin America; the solidarity between our struggles is essential and fundamental.

This declaration would like to extend a fraternal invitation to all groups and individuals interested in getting involved in this co-ordination and LASNET work.

Also this declaration thanks all unions, grass roots organisations and individuals who made possible the gathering in Melbourne and the solidarity activities in Sydney; to achieve this challenging adventure, to assist our confrontation with these multinational monsters destroying our community and environment.

Only the struggle and organisation will make us free!

A lot of strength and move forward with our Global struggles!

20 December, 2010.

Written by Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET),

Actively Supported by SINALTRAINAL, MST, FETRAMIN, CTC-Chile SINTRACARBON, Cordillera People's Alliance (Philippines), Clive Porabou (Bounganville), Barbara Shaw (Mt Nancy Town, NT Australia), Wilman Palmezano (Wayuu and Afro-Colombian communities), Pueblo Libre (Chile), Melbourne Black (Australia), CFMEU (Australia), AMWU (Australia), LHMU (Australia), MADGE (Australia), Greek Democritus Workers League (Australia), El Quinto (Chile), Convergencia Estudiantil (Chile), Articulación Latinoamericana de Movimientos Sociales hacia el Alba de Chile, Inquietando Desde el Margen (Chile), Mapuche Communities in Conflict (Wallmapu/Chile), Movimiento Popular Regional, Fundación Sabana and others.

Any queries, just write to lasnet@latinlasnet.org

www.latinlasnet.org
solidaritygathering2010.wordpress.com
www.latinamericansolidaritynetwork.org

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, 8 February, 5pm
Rally- *Action Against Changes to Sentencing Laws in Victoria*
Parliament House Steps, Spring St, Melbourne

18th- 20th February
Anarchist Summer School
Black Rose Books, Jura Books and other community venues in Sydney
For more info: anarchistsummerschool.weebly.com

Friday, 4 March, from 6.30pm; & Saturday, 5 March, 1-6pm.
Latin American Activist Film Festival – Second Cycle
RMIT Student Union, Building 8, Level 3, Room 18, 350 Swanston Street.
Further details at latinlasnet.org

New Publications

Facta Non Verba
This new journal aims 'to collect and distribute texts and news of actions occurring locally, to reproduce articles that we find relevant and interesting to the Australian context, and to inform and connect the Anarchist space in Australia with the international struggle against domination and authority.' To be published 'whenever we feel like it'. The first issue is out, and available at: http://factanon.blogspot.com/

The Spectre
Monthly Newspaper of the *International Co-ordination Against Multinational Policies (Observatorio Internacional Contra las Políticas de las Multinacionales).* Printed in both English & Spanish; refer to pages 43-47 of this issue for some context and further details. First issue is available for download at: spectrenewsletter.wordpress.com

Black & Red
'[F]ormed with the intention of providing yet another avenue for libertarian socialists of any variety the chance to provide insight on current events, or advance anarchist philosophy…There is no one city that we call home, but rather welcome any editor to our ranks from any nation.' Bi-annual, I think. Shameless self-promotion, as first issue features an interview I did with Paola Periera from the MST'S National Executive.
See: http://blackandredzine.org

American & International Gathering.

- Work towards an exchange of MST members to come to Australia to study English.
- The campaign against the reopening of Rio Tinto's Paguna mine in Bougainville.
- The proposal to send a delegation from the Prescribed Areas Peoples' Alliance to the UNPFII in New York next year to denounce the NT intervention.

Fourth, we declare that LASNET and Australian Trades Union attending the gathering commit to following up the meeting between BHP-Billiton representatives and Wilman Palmezano (Wayuu), Jaime Deluquez (SINTRACARBON) & CFMEU, FETRAMIN & LASNET representatives on Monday, 29 November 2010; and to continue to demand the end the displacement and polluting of Wayuu communities, financial reparations for lands usurped, and the end to the inhuman working conditions endured by Cerrejón miners.

The organisations attending this meeting make the main objective to continue our resistance and struggles in order to achieve truth, justice and reparations for the crimes committed in Colombia which facilitated the plunder of natural resources; and that this situation never happen again in Colombia and in our world.

Fifth, we declare:

That the policies implemented by multinational corporations in Latin America are different to those applied in developed countries. Within developing countries, we see the disregard for labour rights, the use of unusual local legislation to take national resources without limits, and a complete disregard for environmental issues running rampant. We believe that this situation must be the concern of the workers where multinationals have their headquarters. To stop the plunder and abuse of workers' rights by these companies in Latin America, because its probably the same policies will be applied in developed countries, retracting fundamental benefits and rights, and applying the same policies of sub-contraction and casualisation.

We deeply believe it is essential that workers in developed countries, like Australia, work together to face and stop the multinational

- November 5: Celebrating the Poor Peoples and Indigenous Struggles.
- December 10: International Human Rights Day.

- Establish a permanent network of alternative media and the sharing of media resources.
- To call for and organise an international day of action against multinational corporations for July 22, 2011.
- A monthly publication – *'The Spectre'* [first issue available at latinlasnet.org – ed.], edited in Australia by LASNET, to announce actions and events of workers and Indigenous organisations active in their struggles against multinationals and States. This will be sent to the participating countries and be published on the website of each organisation.
- To organise a grass root social movement gathering/conference in Valledupar, Colombia August 19-21, 2011 called *First Latin American & International Gathering "For People's Sovereignty, Against Multinational Corporations". -Defending workers and indigenous rights-*
- To seek co-ordination from the organisations that supported the Gathering, and have already expressed interest in the co-ordination. These include organisations from Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Peru, New Zealand, the US & various European nations.

Thirdly, we declare our support for the resolutions reached during the Melbourne Gathering, the main points of which include:

- The campaign, initiated by SINALTRAINAL internationally and by LASNET in Australia, against Coca-Cola Company.
- To strengthen the Campaign- *'No to the Multinationals' War: For Sovereignty, Democracy, Peace and Wellbeing'* initiated by SINALTRAINAL and an important number of organisations around the world.
- Organising a delegation of Australia Indigenous representatives, trade unionists and activists to Colombia, from 12 to 31 August 2011, to coincide with the *First Latin*

demand for any form of rigorous thinking about society and social change outside of the academy which isn't Marxist (in the broadest sense); the anarchist tradition in Australia, outside of some immigrant communities (and then only for short periods), has rarely attained any significant or popular support, or generated lasting counter-cultures.

But that's another story.

It may be that blogs in particular are unsuited to these kinds of articulations. Perhaps the problem, if there is one, is located elsewhere. Whatever the case, as for 'slackbastard', I was once invited to submit a regular column to Freedom Press for its anarchist fortnightly, and others have suggested I write for various group blogs, but for various reasons I've taken up neither offer. As a record, then, of the opinions and interests of an anarchist living in Melbourne--and perhaps especially insofar as it documents some of the recent history of the Australian far right--it's obviously of at least some interest to others. In the absence of a broader discussion about the merits of 'anarchism' in Australia, however, it's obviously of limited utility, and I'm unsure if it's done much to encourage such a discussion to take place.

A few months ago, someone sent me a bottle of port as a thank you for my efforts, so that's something at least. And as Monty Python's Gloria said to an Interviewer when queried about fictional London gangster Dinsdale Piranha's predilection for violence, "Well it's better than bottling it up isn't it".

The blog has generated over 13,000 comments (including my own). These have varied enormously in quality and range, and included commentary from crazed anti-Semites and sub-literate racists, concerned liberals and angry Marxists, thoughtful critics and vituperative psychotics, anarchists, atheists, agnostics and more besides. A large proportion of comments come from hostile sources. Thus I've been threatened with legal action twice: once by the administrator of a bizarro 'news' site based in the UK (a colleague of local fascists) and on the other occasion by a local celebrity lawyer. I've also received a small number of death threats, and many more threats of physical harm. Most of these have emanated from the local fascist milieu (joined by a small number of their friends in the local music industry).

If I was to measure the success of my blog in terms of its capacity to generate vitriol on the part of the far right, it would have to be judged a roaring success.

The blog's contribution to the development of any kind of anarchist critique of contemporary Australian society has been fairly negligible as far as I can tell. So too its promotion of 'anarchism' as a philosophical framework from which it might be possible to embark upon such a project. This has been despite its relative popularity (I know of no other anarchist site published from within Australia that is anywhere near as popular but would be overjoyed to learn of their existence). Of course, the simple fact of the matter is that there are bugger-all anarchist sites in Australia, and even fewer blogs.

Why this absence?

There's many good reasons, and I'm only going to briefly refer to a few, perhaps with a view to exploring the issue at greater length at a later date. Most obviously, in the absence of a social movement which might respond in some fashion to political articulation of this sort, there's little reason for it to develop in a more serious direction. That is, there's few blogs because there's few anarchists, and nothing resembling even the beginnings of a radical social movement which might respond to or find such virtual scribblings of use. Another reason is historical. There is simply no or very little

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Struggle', 'Latrobe Solidarity', and 'Metal Campaign '75', commented on contemporary developments.[54] These articles sometimes came close to condemning the progressive struggle of reformist unions seeking wage increases, as detracting from the revolutionary potential of the labour movement. However, in general they sought to argue for the unions to adopt a revolutionary perspective on the wage system, to end practices such as wage differentials between industries and to reject wage indexation. *Acracia* also contained articles about international political prisoners, particularly in Spain.[55] Although they were generally unsigned, the student activists probably wrote many of the articles. They saw the development of feminism, environmentalism, and the resurgence of rank-and-file unionism and the discourse of workers control in the seventies, as conducive to anarchism.

By the mid-1970s, the diverse elements of Australian anarchism were coming together. The number of anarchist groups in Australia grew and culminated in the formation of the Federation of Australian Anarchists (FAA) in 1975. The ABC joined this loose coalition of mainly student groups, and published the FAA's Aims and Principles in its subsequent editions.[56] The FAA also involved a Sydney Anarchist Group, although this was very different organisation from the one founded by the Bulgarians. The record of the FAA shows an Australian milieu of socialist libertarianism, with reference points ranging from IWW syndicalism to feminist struggle, and from traditional figures like Bakunin and Kropotkin to libertarians such as Daniel Cohn Bendit and the sexual liberationist William Reich.[57] However, the organisation was also afflicted by similar conflicts as those that had occurred between the Bulgarians and the early New Left. All parts of the FAA were libertarian, and socialist in the sense that they opposed private ownership of the means of production.[58] However, they

[55] *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), pp. 16-18; *Acracia*, No. 38, (May, 1975), pp. 13-14; *Acracia*, No. 39, (1975), pp. 2-4.
[56] 'Same Dog Different Colours', *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), pp. 2-5.
[57] 'FAA Statement of Principles,' *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.
[58] See *Melbourne Anarchist Archives*.
[59] 'FAA Statement of Principles,' *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.

anarchism.[48] Antonio Jimenez was a child during the Civil War, and was schooled properly in anarchism after his arrival in Australia in 1960 by an older Spaniard named Quevos.[49] Jorge Garcia was also born to anarchist parents inside Spain after the Civil War, but became an anarchist in Australia. Along with the aging CNT militants, younger Spaniards such as these interacted with the local anarchists in sixties and seventies.

Towards the end of 1973, some migrant Spanish, students and young worker activists in Melbourne formed the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), and began publishing *Acracia* in English.[50] ABC groups existed around the world and aimed at prisoner solidarity with a focus on anarchist class struggle. The ABC project therefore combined the strong interest of the Spanish in conditions in Spain, with the local anarchist project. The ABC operated mainly in Melbourne but was also present in Sydney, listing a contract address for both cities. Subsequent editions of *Acracia* were published in the name of the ABC.[51]

The English editions of *Acracia* were a fusion of traditional anarchism with an emphasis on how the new social movements of the sixties and seventies affected working-class people. An article on 'Ecology Conference' called for anarchists to attend, even though, 'The environmental movement has mostly been middle class, reformist, with little political awareness or wide perspective.'[52] 'Feminism and the Working Woman' argued for a feminism that looked away from well-educated women in wealthy suburbs, towards the needs of working women.[53] *Acracia* was very interested in the local labour movement. Articles such as 'Builders' Labourers in

[49] The article is signed, J. Jimenez, 'Sobre la España emigrante obrera', *Nostotros*, No. 8 (July, 1973), pp. 10-12.

[50] A biography of Jimenez was written by the Jura Books collective, Susi Russell and Jura Books Collective, 'Antonio (Tony) Jimenez (1935-1990)', originally published in, *Rebel Worker*, (1990), available at <http://www.takver.com/history/sydney/jimenez_a.htm> [Accessed 5/10/2010].

[51] *Melbourne Anarchist Archives: Development of Melbourne Anarchism, 1973-1976,* Vol. 2, (Brunswick, Victoria: Melbourne Anarchist Archives, 1979), p. III; 'Towards the end of 1973 the Anarchist Black Cross was formed', *Acracia,* No. 38, (May, 1975), p. 1.

[52] ASF-M, 'History of the ASF-IWA', p. 1.

[53] *Acracia*, No. 37, (1975), p. 14.

[54] *Acracia*, No. 35, (1975), p. 14.

UK journal *Freedom*.[31] At least until this time the SAG existed as an affiliate of the IWA.[32]

However, in the 1950s and 1960s, the SAG had little success in advancing anarchism to workers in Sydney. Kristoff worked in the transport industry but had little faith in trade union officials.[33] Gransharoff also felt similarly working for the Water Board.[34] The SAG attempted to proselytise on May Days. In 1959 their pamphlet proclaimed: 'The workers of the western world are marching behind their trade-union bosses and politicians, betrayed and disunited, misinformed about the real meaning of 1st of May'.[35] Such efforts came to little avail. The Bulgarians even claimed later that at a May Day rally in 1956 their pamphlets had provoked Trades Hall officials to notify the police that there were anarchists in the crowd.[36]

By the late 1960s SAG had merged more closely with libertarian elements in Sydney, but had some trouble relating to the new counter culture and student movement. In 1966 SAG opened a space called The Cellar in Oxford Street, Paddington. Bulgarian migrants remained involved in the project, chiefly Kristoff and another named Chris who were especially active.[37] Meetings about workers control and other topics were regularly held there.[38] Younger types became involved, including Bill Dwyer who had arrived from New Zealand and was a charismatic speaker. Soon the Cellar was a hang-out for a scene of young, counter-cultural hippies. Kristoff assisted Dwyer to produce his magazine, *Anarchy Now.*[39] However, Dwyer soon became enamoured with the revolutionary potential of LSD, later stating, 'I believe LSD is the most revolutionary weapon

[32] P.S., 'Anarchism and Syndicalism', in, *Anarchist Review: Published by The Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), p. 14.
[33] Sydney Anarchist Group, 'Aims and Principles,' *Anarchist Review: Published by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), p. 21.
[34] Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant', p. 17.
[35] McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 103.
[36] *May Day 1959* (Printed for the Sydney Anarchist Group by Edna Dash, 1959).
[37] ASF-M, 'History of the ASF', p. 1.
[38] James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.
[39] 'In the Cellar', *The Anarchist*, No. 2, (July, 1966), p. 6.
[40] James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'.

the Anarchist'.[27] Grancharoff later stated that 'I left [the SAG] because they would not try to work with the Sydney Libertarians, pessimistic anarchists who considered anarchism as an ideology if not a utopia'.[28] Grancharoff was critical of the Push, but wanted to branch out to the locals. Others stayed in SAG, which continued to argue for communitarian anarchism.

The publications of SAG in the late 1950s expressed a discourse of communitarian anarchism, oscillating between anarcho-syndicalist and anarchist communist notions of how to build a social movement and make a revolution. Some philosophical articles were from a decidedly anarchist-communist point of view. For example the article 'Ownership and Function' in an issue of *Anarchist Review* published by the SAG in 1960 argued against a notion of collectivist property in favour of free access to the means of production by all.[29] However, many articles also expressed a concern to underline the importance of syndicalism to the anarchist project. An earlier issue of *Anarchist Review* published in 1959 contained a review of the Australian labour movement by Norman Rancie, an Australian member of the IWW and former editor of *Direct Action*, who was also probably a member of the SAG. In a language more familiar to Australia than anarchist communism, Rancie expounded the IWW's revolutionary industrial unionism, as anarchism: 'Anarchists are realists and men of action, no mere dreamers. They are materialists, and want no truck with those who wish to... preach morality to the master class.'[30] The third and last edition of *Anarchist Review*, published in 1960, also begins with an exposition of anarchism and syndicalism reproduced from the

[28] Ibid., p. 101.
[29] McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 101.
[30] D.J., 'Ownership and Function', in *Anarchist Review: Published by The Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 3, (June, 1960), pp. 13-14.

[31] An interview with Kristoff in 1985 indicates the group had contact with Norman Rancie; James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney'. Grancharoff also remembers the group involved one member of the IWW, McIntyre; 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 103. The article mentioned is signed only as N.R., 'An Anarchist Looks at the Labour Movement', *Anarchist Review: Issued by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 2, (September, 1959), p. 14.

Botov.[10] Peasant revolts such as the 1903 Preobrasensko Vastanie revolt were associated with anarchist communism.[11] Anarcho-syndicalism appeared in the 1920s, several groups forming in the thirties including the CNT-B, which remained reasonably strong until the 1940s.[12] Anarcho-syndicalists and anarchist communists established an Anarchist Federation (the FAKB) and participated in the broad cooperatives and workers committees movement.[13] The FAKB one of the few organisations with a large support base to embrace the Makhnovist Platform after 1926, which was a controversial document calling for a united organisation to lead the anarchist movement. Bulgaria and neighbouring Macedonia was also one of the few areas of Eastern Europe after the 1920s where anarchism established a mass movement.[14] When the Russians declared war on Bulgaria, the Nazi backed government was overthrown by the full spectrum of the anti-fascist and revolutionary movement.[15] A brief experiment in workers control ensued, which lasted about eight months and was implemented to varying degrees across the country.[16] An essay found in Kristoff's belongings after his death titled 'The Workers Committees in Bulgaria' states: 'I would like to point out that all the committees were libertarian and anarchists took part in them, but they were no anarchists. They were composed of all kinds of views.'[17] Gradually the Soviet-backed communists took

[11] Vladimir Bojanev, 'The History of the Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', *The Raven: Anarchist Quarterly 13*, Vol. 4. No. 1, (January - March, 1991), p. 31.
[11] Ibid., p. 33.
[13] Vadim Damier, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in the 20th Century*, Malcolm Archibold, trans., (Edmonton: Black Cat Press, 2009), p. 89; Lucien van der Walt & Michael Schmidt, *Black Flame: The* Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism (London: AK Press, 2009), p. 169.
[14] Jack Grancharoff, 'The Bulgarian Anarchist Movement', Part One, in *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 28, No. 3, (September - October, 2009), p. 18.

[15] Schmidt, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line'.
[16] Schmidt, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line'.
[17] Robert Graham, 'Bulgarian Anarchist Federation (1945)', in Robert Graham, (ed.), *Anarchism: A Documentary History of Libertarian Ideas, Volume Two: The Emergence of the New Anarchism, (1939-1977)*, (Montéal: Black Rose Books, 2009), p. 29.
[18] 'Workers Committees in Bulgaria', (George Kristoff Archive, n.d.), p. 4.

had to flee Bulgaria when the communists came to power with the aid of the Soviets.[4] Others came to anarchism directly through their experience of communism. This was the case with Grancharoff, who had first made contact with other anarchists while imprisoned in a concentration camp.[5] The Bulgarians first established an anarchist group of their own in Sydney made up of around twenty people.[6] In 1957 eight Bulgarians, five men and three women, as well as some non-Bulgarians making a total of around twelve people, formed the SAG.[7] Nevertheless, SAG became a recognised section of the CNT-B-in-exile, and as such was an affiliate of the anarcho-syndicalist IWA.[8] In 1968 responsibility for publishing *Our Path* for the CNT-B exiled groups was transferred from Paris to Sydney, with George Kristoff as editor.[9] This tiny group attempted to build in Sydney an equivalent of the movement they had left in Bulgaria.

The anarchists were a large political movement in Bulgaria at the time its war government was overthrown in September of 1944. Approximately the third largest group on the Bulgarian left in the thirties, they were one of several armed partisan groups that resisted fascism.[9] Libertarian socialist ideas had a long history in Bulgaria. The early independence struggle against the Ottoman Empire in the 1870s had involved high-profile anarchists, such as the poet and revolutionary Christo

[4] Jack Grancharoff, 'Death of an Old Militant: George Hristov (Kartalsky)', *Rebel Worker*, Vol. 27, No. 201, (October - November, 2008), pp. 17-20.
[5] McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 94.
[6] Ibid., p. 101.
[7] Bob James, 'Bulgarian Anarchists in Sydney', Notes from Interview with George H., 1985, in Bob James, (ed.), 'Anarchism in Australia: An Anthology Prepared for the Australian Anarchist Centennial Celebration, 1-4 May 1986', available from: <http//www.takver.com/history/aia/httoc.htm> [accessed 12th April 2010]; McIntyre, 'Jack the Anarchist', p. 17.
[8] 'An affiliate of the International Working Men's Association', Sydney Anarchist Group, 'Aims and Principles', *Anarchist Review: Issued by Sydney Anarchist Group,* No. 2, (September, 1959), p. 20; ASG-M', 'Report of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Group of Melbourne (ASG-M) to the IWA Plenary, Toulouse, November 1999', p. 1.
[9] *Our Road: Bulgarian Monthly Review*, No. 22, (March, 1973).
[10] Michael Schmidt, with the assistance of Jack Grancharoff, 'The Anarchist-Communist Mass Line: Bulgarian Anarchism Armed', (2008), available at <http://www.anarkismo.net/article/9678> [2/10/10].

position of what used to be called 'the aristocracy of labour' – in this case we are talking about international students, who are most certainly not brought into the country as 'migrant workers', but as guest consumers, who happen to also perform incredible amounts of poorly-paid labour, creating a new bottom end in labour markets, the earnings from which are mostly ploughed straight back into international education economies. Those defined as temporary by the CFMEU are not even necessarily temporary, though many more would be forced to be if the CFMEU has it's way, if they indeed make it through the CFMEU's border control regime at all.

In other words, border policing is a significant part of what remains of the version of 'socialism' based on trade unions, the national management of labour market formation for capital as a remnant of laborist social democracy given new life within the neoliberal restructuring. How many ways can we say it?

To be clear, we are not accusing people in 'the Left' more broadly, at least in its radical edges, of being economic nationalists; we are accusing people of being wilfully blind to the actual foundations of union power, of the role of the unions in the cycle of reproduction, as a mythology of proletarian struggle replaces paying attention to the ugly sides of precisely this assertion within capital. The Green Bans play the perfect role, the brief moment at the height of social democracy, after the White Australia policy pushed by the trade unions was replaced by multicultural patriotism, when 'anti-racism' and progressive unionism could stand proud, before neoliberalisation led to the current moment, when the aggressive assertion of border control and war against the foreign worker became the simple flip side of the defence of trade unions and of the relative privilege of certain 'memberships' within the global division of labour.

The question, then, is the old one: given this, how can the proletariat, understood as a class of capital which exists as its divisions and in all of the mediations of its reproduction, abolish capitalism?

nervous of a downward mobility, at its worst of an exclusion from employment, and precisely when neoliberalisation seeks to strengthen the relation of income to wage-labour and of wage-labour to life and survival. These divisions are gendered, racialised, and constituted through exclusion and state violence. If the hierarchies and divisions were just false consciousness, capitalism would have trouble lasting out a decade: "if things were simple, word would have gotten around" (Derrida). Moreover, such a view implies a possibility of harmonising the interests of the proletariat within capitalism, i.e. in its reproduction as proletariat, as the capital-labour relation.

Australia's skilled migration program in particular must serve the interests of the Australian people (citizens and residents). The program cannot be justified unless it benefits the existing population. The Bill will give the Australian government power to do that more effectively and deal more effectively with oversupply.
CFMEU[7]

[7] Ibid.

When those who defend migrant workers and migration make suggestions that it is a fantasy that migrant workers drive down wages, or compete with the earlier-arrived, or citizens, for jobs, they articulate racism as merely ideology, and not its materiality. This in turn suggests our task is merely to confront meanness towards the darker-skinned and less fortunate others within the Australian labour movement, making it difficult to recognise that militant trade unionism in Australia functions most successfully as the racialised operation of workers power – or border control as labour market management.

Border-control-as-labour-market-management: the imperatives which are so evident in the CFMEU's need to invoke 'young Australians' and to distinguish between permanent and temporary migration in its consistent attempts, often in collaboration with other Left blue collar unions such as the AMWU and ETU, to have the Federal Government act to exclude a host of people from particular labour markets. And just to be clear, these 'temporary migrants' are not scabs or even people brought in with the purpose of undermining the

A traditionally core power of trades unions derives from the capacity to collectively disrupt the process of exploitation, most obviously through the strike. But this power is thus also derived from the process of reproduction of labour markets and of the division of labour. Insofar as the labour markets and the division of labour are constituted through divisions of nation and citizenship, the question of border policing and of the definition of the foreigner is necessarily implied. And it is in these relations, and not just in nationalist mobilisation of union bureaucrats or backward attitudes amongst particular sections of the proletariat, that we find a material basis of the persistence of overt Left nationalism amongst the trade unions long after such Left nationalism has faded into the unspoken assumptions of much of the Left, or even just faded per se. Thus the CFMEU can write, with little apparent awkwardness, that "most (but not all) of the illegal migrants detected by DIAC compliance work are from Asian countries" and that "illegal work is abhorrent and against Australia's national interest", so that: "Failure to prevent illegal work by a mainly Asian workforce is not conducive to developing positive community attitudes towards Asian people".[3]

Economic nationalism as the ideology of trade unionism

IMMIGRATION COMPLIANCE

The company recognizes its obligations in respect of compliance with the Australian Immigration laws.

Existing and prospective Employees will be required to complete the Authority contained in Appendix J of this Agreement to obtain from Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) details of immigration status. No person will be allowed to undertake any work for the Company unless it is verified he/she has the right to work.

Copies of this authority will be available on request to the Secretary of the Union of nominee.

This provision will be strictly complied with by the Company. –

[3] CFMEU, *Submission to Review of Employer Sanctions Legislation 2010*, 9 July 2010, pp. 4-5.

of proletarian defence, centrally of the price of labour-power.

On the other hand we have the Left Communists and "ultra-leftists", and I guess the Socialist Equality Party, who attempt to articulate critiques of these positions and of the trade unions, even of trade unionism. For some of these tendencies, trade unions are understood as an institutional mediation of capital-labour relations, brokers of collective labour-power to particular capitals, integrated into the process of general reproduction of capitalist social relations. The recent exchange in Mutiny (http://jura.org.au/mutiny) between Anthony Hayes (Issue #49, 'Pro-revolutionaries and Trade Unions'; Issue #55 'Against Capital, Against Work',) and Lindsay Hawkins (Issue #51 'Radical Unionism'), reads like a meeting of these tendencies, even if a debate never quite takes place.

The problem for the latter, of course, is that this horizon of unionism is not limited to the formal institutions that are trade unions in all of their state-recognised and regulated glory; even wildcat strikes are usually negotiations of the terms of reproduction of the capital-labour relation, as are the actions of rank'n'file/base unions. This is also a problem for our auto-unionist Leftists, of course, since rank'n'file-ist versions of this often seem like oddly moral injunctions to self-manage, through long unpaid hours of activity, precisely a negotiation of the terms of our integration into wage-labour, rather than to delegate it to some union official. The principle here, within the horizon of unionism, is not particularly persuasive to many people.

It is here that we encounter the foundation of trade unionism not merely on the existing hierarchical division of labour, but upon the intersection of this division of labour with the assertion of the borders of the nation and the boundaries of citizenship.

Our unions strongly support permanent migration, which had been a great success story of our nation and played a central role in establishing modern Australia. But temporary migration, which expanded greatly under the Howard administration, is another story.
-CFMEU[2]

[2] CFMEU, *Submission to Senate Inquiry into the Welfare of International Students*, August 2009, p. 3.

TRADE UNIONS: IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

By Ben Rosenzweig & Liz Thompson

We were asked if we would write an article on contemporary Australian trade unionism, as more-or-less an expansion of a short paper which we helped write for the Melbourne Workers Solidarity Network (WSN). But rather than simply elaborate on the points in that paper, we thought we would start by telling a story, of the collision of movements; a story which we think has interest in itself but which we can also use to explain our view of trade unionism in Australia. So please bear with us.

The story starts with the neoliberal restructuring of Australian post-secondary education, and the formation of an industry based upon the commodification of education, and of pathways to migration and to access to conditions of social reproduction in Australia. The original intent was for educational institutions to sell this commodity to wealthy people from various 'Third World' countries, elites who would have their privilege ratified and extended via these new economies.

But this shift in the basis of Australian education institutions began to intersect with other movements – specifically with the massive rise in the global circulation of those who are not wealthy, proletarian and proletarianising migration, legal and illegal, which has risen to the many tens of millions of people every year. Such people

committed. 'Those offenders are not back on the streets.'[5]

More people in prison does not mean safer communities

Prisons don't stop people committing crime. In fact, prisons often fail to rehabilitate people and may even increase offending. A 2010 study by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics found that offenders who were sentenced to prison were more likely to re-offend than those convicted of the same offence who received noncustodial penalties.[6] 56% of people in prison in Australia have been in prison before.[7] While putting someone in prison may stop them from offending for the period of their imprisonment, as a crime control mechanism, prison is blunt, harmful and extremely expensive.[8] The failure of prisons to rehabilitate prisoners is not surprising given that they are poorly equipped to address the underlying causes of crime and can exacerbate problems such as mental illness. Access to drug and alcohol counselling and programs, other offending programs, psychological counselling, education programs, skills programs and other rehabilitative strategies is severely limited in prison. Community resources would be better used on harm-prevention measures such as health care, education, housing, and employment. Council of Australian Government figures show that the average expenditure per prisoner per day in 2008-09 was $242.65, or close to $90,000 per year.[9] Policing and prisons respond to crimes after they occur, and often target the most disadvantaged members of our community. A more effective use of government spending would be to tackle issues such as poverty, unemployment, mental illness, education and health issues such as drug and alcohol use, which in turn would mean decreased crime and create safer communities.

[5] AAP, 'Attorney-General opposes minimum sentences', November 23 2010.
[6] NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, 'The effect of prison on adult re-offending', August 2010.
[7] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Prisoners in Australia 2009 4517.0 (2009) p 11.
[8] Smart Justice 'More prisons are not the answer to reducing crime'; accessed 23 November 2010.
[9] ibid.

Action Against Changes to Sentencing Laws in Victoria

Tuesday, 8 February 2011, 5 – 7pm
@ Parliament House Steps, Spring St, Melbourne.
Join the Abolition Collective to challenge the proposed new laws of the Baillieu Government, which will lead to more people in prison. More people in prison does not result in a safer community. Help us show the new government that there are people who will fight these changes.

Why are we having this action?

The new Liberal-National Government is about to make huge changes to sentencing in Victoria, which will ultimately increase the amount of people in prisons. Some of the new legislation has already been introduced to Parliament, and the laws may come into force as early as February 2011.

Legislation before Parliament - Sentencing Further Amendment Bill 2010

The new Government has already introduced legislation to abolish suspended sentences for what are termed 'significant Crimes'. This is the first step in a tough-on-crime approach. The measures go further than the legislation enacted by the previous government in 2010, which abolished the use of suspended sentences for 'serious crimes' such as rape, murder and manslaughter. The new law will apply to crimes including recklessly causing serious injury and drug trafficking. Suspended sentences have been an important and flexible sentencing option for Judges and Magistrates in Victoria, which allow them to respond to the circumstances in which an offence is committed and the situation of the individual convicted. Abolishing the use of suspended sentences will

be aware of the campaign against G4S after the death of Mr Ward while being transported by the company in Western Australia. Some of you will know that G4S have also controversially run Australia's detention centres.

There are lessons about this in the history of Victoria's private prison operations. The two private prisons of Port Phillip and Fulham stand as remnants to the push by the Kennett government to privatise half of Victoria's prisons, a project which saw falling standards of care in several prisons, along with increasing levels of violence and harm. Renewed requests to improve prison conditions by the government were ignored to the point where after Kennett was ousted, the ALP could no longer keep handing breach notices to certain prisons and these were reintegrated into the control of the state.

What does this say? The debate of public versus private, re-emerging in NSW, is an attempt to frame the arguments around how to go about reducing costs, maximising profit, and shifting responsibility. This is the clue for why campaigners for asylum seekers and people against prisons need to draw resources. Given this nexus we need to ask questions around how a fight against private corporations in prisons and detention centres can abstract the commitment against detention centres, policing and rates of incarceration. We also need to be aware that campaigning around the standards of care can play directly into a privatising argument. The question then becomes around what kind of action to take.

If you'd like to come along to a meeting, or would like to be notified of the action, please send us an email at abolitioncollective@gmail.com

[See also: http://www.abolitioncollective.org]

When it is said that the operation of 'people smugglers' is disrupted, we know that this also means people on the move are affected. This internationalisation of policing is structured in a realm of combating terrorism and human trafficking, but no mention is made of what happened to the 5,100 people seeking asylum who are disrupted by these processes.

This leads to thoughts on how policing and the border within the criminal justice system affects people here. People of some refugee and immigrant backgrounds are much more likely to be imprisoned than others. A clear example is the massive overrepresentation of Vietnamese women in Victorian prisons. Currently Vietnamese women make up around 14% of the overall women's prison population in Victoria. Given that in Victoria only around 1.5% of households speak Vietnamese, these figures show that the number of Vietnamese born women in Victorian prisons are massively over-represented.[2]

This situation is similar to the issues faced by Indigenous people in the criminal justice system. The complex and interconnected factors of disadvantage, poverty, over-policing and systemic racism that contribute to the over-representation of Indigenous men and women in the criminal justice system can also inform our understanding of refugee and immigrant's imprisonment in Australia.[3]

There isn't enough discussion around these issues - more needs to happen.

Additionally, from a report released last year titled *'Boys, you wanna give me some action?'* (2009) you can read about factors of the construction of a local and an ethnic outsider, combined with heat by conservative media that legitimated violent and pervasive action by police towards African communities in western Melbourne. In a quote from the report:

> [The police] are able to feel as though they are acting on behalf of 'the community' and against the 'outsiders'. The construction of a

[2] *See:* Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People (CHRIP), *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in Prisons*, October 2010, accessible at: <http://www.chrip.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=61&limitstart=20>.

[3] ibid.

decarceration, as well as to build and support leadership of people most impacted, including people who have been inside and their families. It is clear to see, people campaigning against borders are doing the same thing because often these issues are the same thing.

The choices police make about which people to target, what to target them for, and when to arrest and charge them, play a major role in who ultimately gets locked up and those choices are made within the already problematic and discriminatory system. It is on this point we need to recognize two important factors: the targeting of communities by police is both within Australia and in the methods taken to police the border. We need to remember that asylum seekers and refugees can end up as the targeted communities of police operations once in Australia as well.

As an example of this, I want to quickly quote the 2009-10 Australian Federal Police annual report. It gave us a sense of the deeply entrenched relationship between policing and policing of the borders: To 'combat people smuggling, the AFP generated a law enforcement program based on three tenets, prosecution, disruption and capacity building':

1. 'Prosecution strategy' is the prosecution of people smugglers.

2. 'Disruption strategy' provides actionable intelligence for foreign law enforcement action and to stop people before they depart for Australia.

3. 'Capacity building' aids the capacity of the Indonesian National Police in particular and law enforcement agencies in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Malaysia to disrupt and prosecute those involved in people smuggling activities.[1]

The AFP claim the disruption of over 6,ooo people, predominately Afghani, Iranian, Iraqi and Sri Lankan, as well as 357 crew members who have or will likely face charges relating to people smuggling offences in Australian waters. Of whom mandatory sentencing is likely.

The report also states that there have been 192 disruptions involving more than 5,100 people bound for Australia, leading to the arrest of 155 people smuggling organisers/facilitators overseas.

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[1] AFP Report 2009-10, <http://www.afp.gov.au/media-centre/publications/annual-reports.aspx#afp>

admit that violent crimes occur. We live in the West. We've been victims. But unlike the politicians, we're also poor as dirt. So our approach to "knife crime" is a little different.

Government strategy focuses on isolating violent crime as a stand-alone phenomenon, perpetrated by vicious yoof gangs who roam the streets in search of your money (if you have any). Along with the new legislation, the government is tackling the problem by increasing the numbers of police, both overall and in terms of their street presence. This is why we keep getting interrupted with police recruiting ads while we're trying to watch *Blue Heelers*, *The Force*, *City Homicide*, and *Gangs of Oz*. And what happens to the nasty little pieces of shit who cross the line? They are thrown into Melbourne's Yoof InJustice Centre in Parkville.

A scandal erupted on 6 October when it emerged that the conditions in these kiddie prisons were, well, like those of a prison: disease-ridden, rotting infrastructure, and severe overcrowding. The Minister for Yoof Services[!] responded like a true politician. First, she said the allegations were "anonymous" (i.e. by inmates who didn't want a beating) and "unsupported" (i.e. unsupported by the government, and more importantly unsupportive of the government). A nice bit of cognitive disavowal (look it up you bloody prole), for Neville went on to explain away the problems which she claimed were non-existent in the first place. The conditions in the prisons are bad because they are full of prisoners! She said declining conditions were due to the "changing profile" of the inmates. We wonder what has changed? Are the modern inmates younger, more Asian, or poorer? Are knives getting sharper? Or is the government line the same old shit?

The police state has new gadgets, new recruits, and new laws. But in our minds it is the same old repressive apparatus it has always been, and it has the same purpose. The police and prisons are not here to hunt some strange phantom gangsters, they're here to police *us*, the poor, the proletariat. The new police are harassing *you*. The new search powers are to violate *your body*. And the overcrowded prisons will always have space for *you* and *your friends*.

EDITORIAL

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Lisa Neville is Victoria's Minister for Yoof and Community Services. On the 9th of November, as the government's plan to tackle knife crime got rolled out in Footscray, she told the press (Anthea Cannon in *Maribyrnong Leader*, 9 Nov 2010):

> We [politicians] want young people to understand the new weapons laws in Victoria, the impact of knife crime on others, learn [government-approved] strategies to prevent violence, and take [sole] responsibility for their actions.

As part of the crack-down on knife crime, the government passed two waves of legislation. The first, according to *The Age* (Chris Vedelago, 16 May 2010), allows:

> Police [to] nominate an area - for example, Federation Square [yeah right], a railway station or pub [in Sunshine], a regional city nightclub precinct or even a street [in Sunshine] in which a private party is being held - and search anyone entering the area.

Perhaps we are being unfair. We've also seen regular spot searches at Footscray station.

The second round of legislation did away with all of the "nominated area" red tape to allow the police to search any [young immigrant] person, anywhere [in Sunshine], at any time [yep, that's right]. Of course we

Website:

melbourneblack.wordpress.com

Email:

melbourneblack@gmail.com

Editors:

Seamus, Benny Rudeboy, Rebecca, Mike.

Cover:

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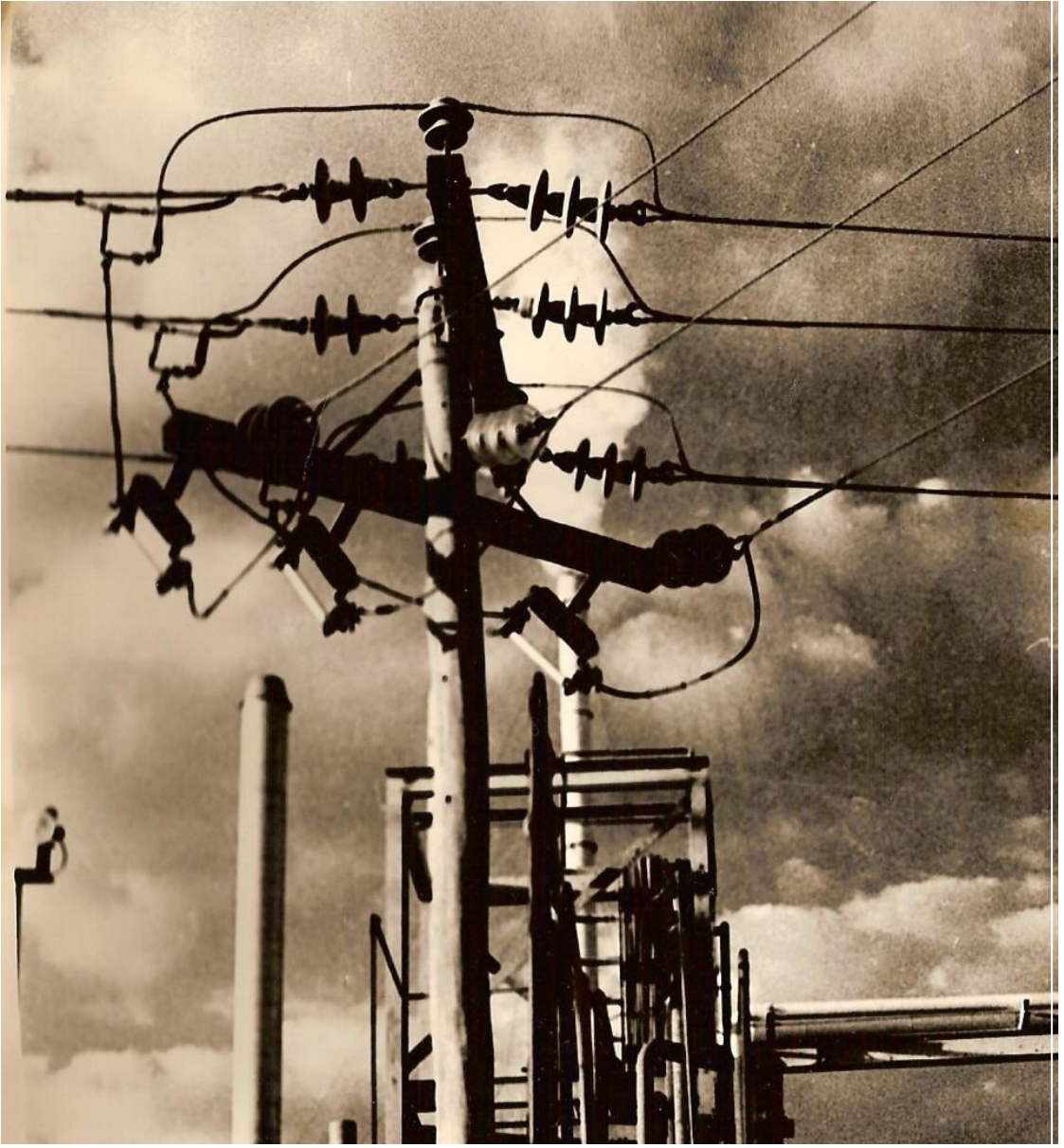

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